

Development of Social Interaction in Children with Autism: A Literature Review

Otizimli Çocuklarda Sosyal Etkileşimin Geliştirilmesi: Literatür Taraması

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Abstract

Objective: Autism is a developmental disorder characterized by delay and deviation in early life and lifelong standing, social relationships, communication, behavior and cognitive development. The main problem among the characteristics of autistic children is the inadequacy of social interactions. The treatment process can be improved by increasing the social interactions of autistic children with a systematical education. For this reason, it was aimed to examine the studies in the literature that have been conducted to improve social interactions in children with autism.

Material and Method: EBSCOhost, Science Direct, and Google Scholar databases were used for the literature review and the studies on autistic children and social interactions in these children were included

Results: Role-playing, performance, modeling, coaching, direct teaching method, problem-solving or cognitive process approach, cognitive social learning method, peer-supported learning, drama, scenario and social stories, classroom-based social skills activity programs, cooperative learning methods are used in the social skills training of students with special needs. Some studies use a single technique, and some studies use more than one technique together.

Conclusions: Early diagnosis and treatment of children with autism are highly important. Training provided by considering the personality characteristics and habits of the children with autism, the positive attitudes of the family and the skills of planning the time and the achievements of using the skills gained by these training in daily life will positively affect the development of social interaction.

Keywords: autism, child, social interaction

Özet

Amaç: Otizm, yaşamın erken dönemlerinde başlayan ve yaşam boyu süren, sosyal ilişkiler, iletişim, davranış ve bilişsel gelişmede gecikme ve sapmayla belirli gelişimsel bir bozukluktur. Otistik çocukların karakteristik özellikleri içinde temel sorun sosyal etkileşim yetersizliğidir. Programlı bir eğitim ile otistik çocukların sosyal etkileşimleri artırılarak tedavi süreçlerinde iyileşme gözlenebilmektedir. Bu nedenden yola çıkılarak, literatürde otizimli çocuklarda sosyal etkileşimin geliştirilmesi için yapılan çalışmaların incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Materyal-Metot: Literatür taraması, EBSCOhost, Science Direct, Google Akademik veri tabanları kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiş olup, otizimli çocuklar ve bu çocuklarda sosyal etkileşimi ele alan çalışmalar dahil edilmiştir.

Bulgular: Özel gereksinimli öğrenciler için sosyal beceri eğitiminde, rol oynama, gösteri, model olma, antrenörlük, doğrudan öğretim yöntemi, problem çözme veya bilişsel süreç yaklaşımı, bilişsel sosyal öğrenme yöntemi, akran destekli öğrenme, drama, senaryo ve sosyal öyküler, sınıf temelli sosyal beceri etkinlik programları, işbirlikçi öğrenme yöntemlerinin kullanıldığı görülmektedir. Bazı çalışmalarda tek bir teknik, bazı çalışmalarda ise birden fazla teknik beraber kullanılmaktadır.

Sonuç: Otizimli çocukların erken tanı ve tedavisi son derece önemlidir. Otizimli çocukların kişilik özellikleri, huyları, ailenin olumlu tutumları, zamanı planlayabilme becerileri göz önünde tutularak verilen eğitimler ve bu eğitimlerle kazandıkları becerileri günlük hayata aktarma başarıları sosyal etkileşimin gelişimini olumlu yönde etkileyecektir

Anahtar Kelimeler: otizm, çocuk, sosyal etkileşim

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1. Introduction

Autism is a lifelong developmental disorder starting in the early stages of life and is determined with retardation and aberration in social relations, communication, behaviors, and cognitive development. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is characterized with social isolation, abnormal social communication, repetitive behaviors, resistance to any change in the routine, abnormal responses to sensory stimuli, insensitivity to pain, non-compliance in sensory expression, abnormal movements, underdevelopment in speaking and communication, specific and limited intellectual characteristics (Motavalli Mukaddes, 2017; Baio et al., 2018).

Early infancy autism was first identified by Leo Kanner in 1943. In addition, the American Psychiatric Association clarified the criteria for the diagnosis of autistic disorders in DSM-IV. A similar classification was suggested by the World Health Organization in 1993 (ICD-10: International Classification of Diseases). Since 2013, DSM-5 has been started to be used in the classification of ASD. It is known that no drug is fully effective in the treatment of autism; however, drug treatment and behavioral therapy should be applied together to control the symptoms of autism. Development of social skills and educational therapy are the main treatment of autism (Motavalli Mukaddes, 2017).

The main problem among the characteristics of autistic children is the inadequacy of social interactions. The social interaction characteristics of these children caused by autism, such as aversion to establishing relationships with peers or inadequacy of communication, lead to inadequate peer relations. On the other hand, when communicating with peers, they show characteristics such as lack of interest in what their peers do, not sharing their likes, inability to adjust their social distance, inability to make enough eye contact, inability to use appropriate facial expressions, gestures and body posture and these characteristics cause them to fail in their relationship with their peers (Attwood, 2000). The treatment process can be improved by increasing the social interactions of autistic children with a systematical education. For this reason, it was aimed to examine the studies in the literature that have been conducted to improve social interactions in children with autism.

2. Materials and Methods

EBSCOhost, Science Direct, and Google Scholar databases were used for the literature review and the studies on autistic children and social interactions in these children were included.

3. Results and Discussion

In the 1990s, projects on autism, awareness studies, and organization have been started in Turkey. As a result of these efforts, İlgi Autism Association (İlgi Otizmli Çocukları Koruma Derneği) has been established in Ankara and Support and Training Foundation for Autism (Otizmlilere Destek ve Eğitim

Vakfi-TÖDEV) in Istanbul (Tekin-İftar et al., 2013). Later, the Autism Foundation was established as a model in Turkey in 2010 in order to support individuals with autism lifelong (Ekici, 2013).

There are state-owned 33 Autistic Children Education Center (OÇEM) affiliated to Ministry of Education and job training centers in Turkey. They were renamed as Private Education Practice Centers. Istanbul Center for Rehabilitation Care and Family Consulting affiliated to Ministry of Family and Social Policy has been established for the first to provide the care and rehabilitation services for individuals with autism. Istanbul Center for Rehabilitation Care and Family Consulting is a 24-hour boarding facility for individuals with autism over the age of 18 years. Umut Evleri was first established in 2008, providing an opportunity for the community to live in apartments or in detached houses (Yalçın, 2017). In addition, the Ministry of National Education published a booklet in 2016 to use in the education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and published a literacy curriculum booklet for children with ASD in 2017 (MEB, 2016; MEB, 2017a).

Federation of Autism Associations prepared an Autism Action Plan and conducted a Content Development and Follow-up Project in 2017. 76% of the children from whom the data were collected were male, 61% of the parents were mothers, and 72% of the parents had no information on autism when their children were diagnosed with autism. In the same report, it can be seen that the level of knowledge of the families about the disease has increased since 2010 when their children were diagnosed with autism. 51% of the families stated that their child did not receive any paid special education and 97% stated that they wanted their child to receive special education. In addition, 74% of the families did not find the education of their children sufficient in terms of duration and quality (Federation of Autism Associations, 2017).

"The National Action Plan for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (2016-2019)" dated December 3, 2016 and numbered 29907 was published in the Official Gazette and came into operation (Federation of Autism Associations, 2016). In this context, the Ministry of Health stated that the ASD Assessment Program would be added to the "Psychosocial Development Support Program for Children", that the relevant program would be integrated into the "Family Medicine Distance Education Modules" and that this practice would be extended throughout the country (Federation of Autism Associations, 2016).

Role-playing, performance, modeling, coaching, direct teaching method, problem-solving or cognitive process approach, cognitive social learning method, peer-supported learning, drama, scenario and social stories, classroom-based social skills activity programs, cooperative learning methods are used in the social skills training of students with special needs. Some studies use a single technique, and some studies use more than one technique together (Avcioğlu, 2005). The Ministry of National Education published a module on how to educate children with ASD in the scope of mainstreaming education program (MEB, 2017b).

In the light of the studies conducted, in addition to the academic skills of the students with special needs in the mainstreaming education process, the development of social skills such as adaptive skills, self-control, communication, and cooperation has gained importance and social skills training has been approved as one of the main objectives of mainstreaming education practices. For the achievement of these goals, it is emphasized that form teachers should inform other children and increase

communication and interaction between the two groups in social skills programs (Kargin et al., 2003). While planning these studies, it is suggested for teachers to conduct "social skills" activities that will increase the empathy skills of the students by using methods such as respecting individual differences in the classroom, being a positive model for accepting and valuing. Moreover, they are suggested to show positive examples such as movies, books in which how some individuals become successful and famous despite their disability, and to invite guest speakers (Motavalli Mukaddes, 2017). The studies conducted to improve social interaction in children with autism are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The studies conducted to improve social interaction in children with autism

Researcher and Year	Objective	Result
Kamps et al., (1992)	To examine the use of social skills groups to improve the social interactions of autistic children with their peers	Findings have shown that social skills training applied in the classroom setting is beneficial for both groups in terms of increasing the communication. This finding supports the methods practiced for social interaction, such as cooperative learning and learning with group activities.
Şahbaz (2004)	To examine the effects of instruction of normal students continuing to mainstreaming classes about their disabled peers on the social acceptance levels of disabled people	It has been found that informing normal peers about disabled students affects social acceptance levels of disabled individuals positively.
Atasoy and Uylaş (2006)	Practicing a short-term training program to gain the ability to understand and express emotions in autistic cases	After the study, the case has started to be able to express his/her own feelings and feelings of the others related to the events and has gained the ability to establish cause and effect relation.
Uçar (2008)	To examine the effectiveness of the program on the development of the adoptive attitude towards people developed differently	It has been observed in the research that girls are more likely to accept autistic people than boys.
Balçık (2010)	Ensuring a student with autistic characteristics in the preschool mainstreaming program to gain the ability to introduce him/herself, ask for help or information, participate in the ongoing event	It has been determined that social skills teaching using social stories is effective and that the skills taught are permanent according to the follow-up data.
Girli and Atasoy (2010)	To examine the effectiveness of social skills training program prepared based on cognitive process approach in order mainstreaming students to gain the "coping with being teased" and "avoiding inappropriate touching" skills.	16 stories and 16 picture cards related to these stories have been used. 2 sessions have been made with each student per week and a total of 22 studies have been conducted. As a result, the training was found to be effective.
Girli and Sabırsız (2011)	"To examine the effectiveness of "program for emotion teaching with pictures"	It has been determined that the program was effective and that it has been substantially maintained in the follow-up session held after 15 days.

Akgün (2015)	To examine the effects of social stories prepared and presented by prospective teachers on gaining aimed social skills in children with ASD in preschool age, and maintaining these skills after one, three and five weeks after the end of the application and their generalizations of aimed social skills to different people and environments.	It has been shown that children with ASD gained the aimed social skills by 100%, maintained the acquired social skills in the first, third and fifth weeks following the end of the research and that they could generalize these skills to different environments and people.
Aydemir (2015)	To examine marital adjustment, coping strategies and social support perceptions of autistic children's parents	It has been observed that mothers had a higher level of problem-solving focused coping and a higher level of social support perceived from the family compared to fathers and that marital adjustment increased with the social support perceived by autistic children from the family.
Güven and Vuran (2015)	To practice "Group Interventions in the Development of Social Skills of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder"	It has been revealed that group education was highly effective.
Kaya (2015)	To compare the effectiveness and efficiency of the video clue that includes and does not include audio narration in the teaching of popping popcorn and squeezing fruit juice to students with autism spectrum disorder	Both attempts were found to be effective in the teaching of popping popcorns and squeezing fruit juice skills to students with autism spectrum disorder.
Turhan (2015)	Comparison of the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching using social stories and video models in the teaching of social skills to children with ASD	It has been stated that families found video model practices more effective than social story practices, and that their children could maintain and generalize the skills they acquired in different environments after the end of the study, and that families found social story and video model methods as applicable.
Göç (2016)	To determine the effects of activity charts presented via iPad on the ability to perform homework independently in children with autism spectrum disorder	It has been observed that the practice was effective and that students could maintain these skills and use them in different environments.
Kutlu (2016)	To compare the teaching of protection from foreign people to individuals with ASD using only social stories and using social stories with a video model in terms of effectiveness and efficiency	It has been observed that individuals maintained their skills of protection from foreign people that they learned with both methods.
Özgönel (2016)	To examine the effectiveness of an education program developed in order to increase relationships with peers, adaptation to school and social acceptance of autistic mainstreaming students educated	It has been found that the program was effective on the social acceptance of peers and social competence and school adaptation behaviors of autistic students.

	in first-degree classrooms of primary schools in İzmir in 2012	
Yavuz (2016)	To compare the effectiveness and efficiency of modeling using video and video clue methods in teaching the behavior of preparing teabag and cheese sandwich among in-home skills to children with ASD	It has been found that the video clue method was more efficient than teaching with modeling using a video.
Talaei-Khoei et al., (2017)	To examine the effectiveness of robot, use in speaking skills training of autistic children	It has been proven that the speaking skills of autistic children were increased with the use of robots in training.

4. Conclusion

Children with autism who have Intelligence Quotient score over 70 in the preschool period and with language development up to the age of 6 years are more likely to study in a university and have a job to earn money. Therefore, early diagnosis and treatment of children with autism are highly important. The child should be evaluated according to the characteristics of age in the treatment and the development of language-social skills, the reduction of problematic behaviors, the support of the family, child and caregivers are necessary during the treatment. Training provided by considering the personality characteristics and habits of the children with autism, the positive attitudes of the family and the skills of planning the time and the achievements of using the skills gained by these training in daily life will positively affect the development of social interaction.

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